

Toxic vs. Top-notch Culture

Top-notch	Toxic
Caring and supportive of others	Apathetic and self-protective
Cohesive	Fragmented
Collaborative	Independent or competitive
Diverse	Homogeneous; conforming
Efficacious; "can-do"	Helpless; dependent
Energetic	Lethargic
Democratic; egalitarian	Elitist
Focuses on student and adult learning	Focuses on schooling
Focuses on excellence; high expectations	Focuses on "getting by"
Hopeful; optimistic	Hopeless; despairing
Innovative	Satisfied with status quo
Interdependent	Isolated
Respectful	Disrespectful
Trusting	Cautious; suspicious

Assessing Our School Culture

Directions: Read through the descriptions below of “top-notch” and “toxic” school cultures. With your school in mind, mark the spot on each continuum that best describes your school’s culture. Use “10” as exemplary and “1” as very toxic.

Top-notch

Toxic

Caring and
supportive of others

Apathetic and
self-protective

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Cohesive

Fragmented

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Collaborative

Independent or
competitive

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Diverse

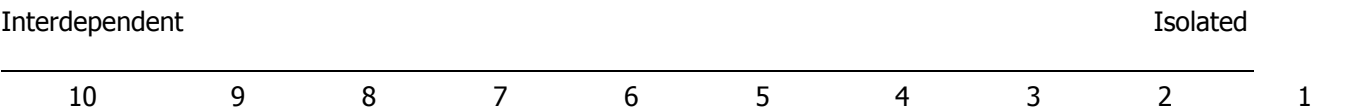
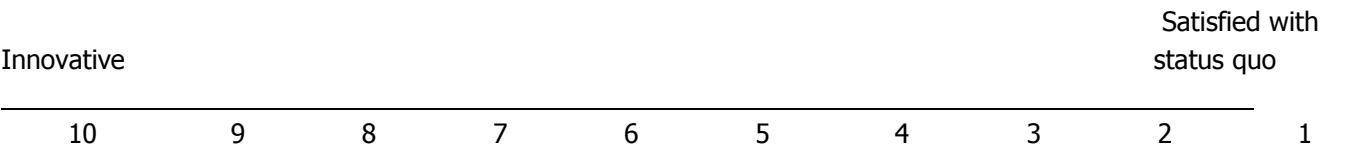
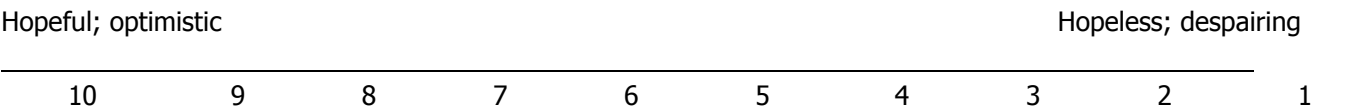
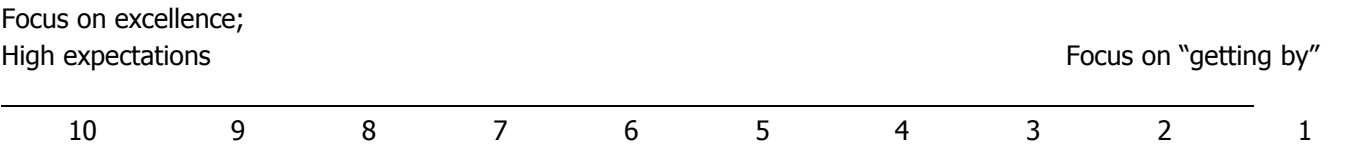
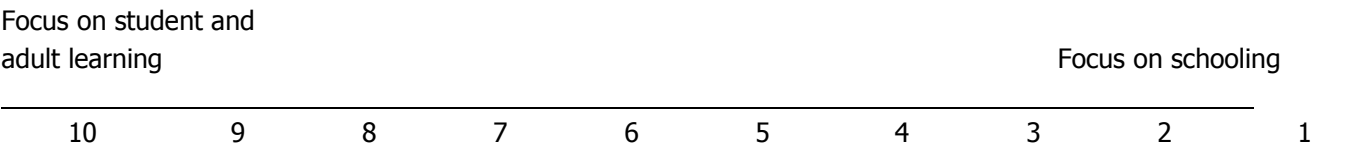
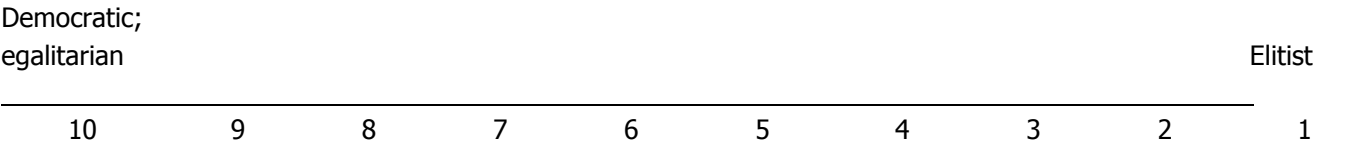
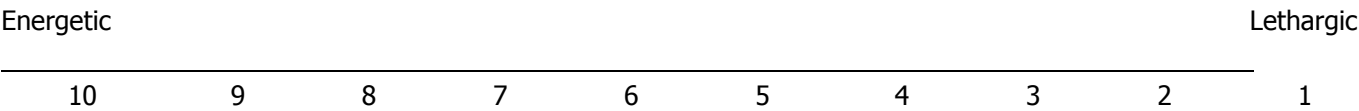
Homogeneous;
conforming

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Efficacious;
“can-do”

Helpless; dependent

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



Respectful

Disrespectful

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

Trusting

Cautious; suspicious

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

Compare your responses to your team members' responses. Discuss the following:

- What aspects of your school's culture most support student and adult learning?
- What qualities of your culture may interfere with the learning of some students and adults?
- Can you imagine ways in which your culture might be improved?